

FRESNO COUNTY
Juvenile Justice Mental Health Collaborative (\$997,770 grant)

This project combines the use of thorough mental health screenings and assessments with intensive treatment and services provided through one of two evidence-based models, either Family Functional Therapy (FFT) or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT). The county expects the project to serve up to 75 mentally ill juvenile offenders during the grant period.

With grant funds, the county implemented the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument, Second Version (MAYSI-2), which is an evidence-based tool for assessing the mental health issues of youth. Within 24 hours of being booked into the juvenile hall, youth receive this assessment, which is administered by a deputy probation officer or institution correctional officers. Youth identified with possible mental health conditions are referred to the newly developed Behavioral Health Court (BHC). An interdisciplinary BHC team determines the youths' eligibility and suitability for the program. The BHC team is led by the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Delinquency Court and includes probation and clinical staff, a Juvenile Justice Services Coordinator, public defender and deputy district attorney, and an educational liaison.

Youth admitted to the program receive a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation and intensive case management and probation supervision while in the community. The BHC team works with the youth and his/her family to develop an individualized treatment plan for FFT or ACT services, which may include in-home individual and family therapy, medication management, crisis counseling, and assistance with housing, employment, education and transportation.

As deemed necessary, the judge orders periodic reviews to monitor the youths' progress, and in each case, the BHC team determines successful completion of, or termination from, the program.

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